

A Seasonable S P E E C H

Made by
Alderman Atkins,

IN
The Rump-Parliament.

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Mr. Speaker,

After so many dispensations and out-goings of Providence, we are now the third time returned to sit in this Honourable House again; but how long we shall do so, I believe the wisest of us all cannot tell: For the Souldiers have of late set up Governments, as Boys do Nine-pins, to throw them down again: But how oft soever they turn us out hereafter, I shall never doubt to get in again; for I perceive those Changes and Revolutions (as they call them) are just like casting of Knaves at Cards, where some play, and some sit out until the Set be up, or the Gamesters fall out and throw up their Cards and then they stand fast to get in again. But notwithstanding so many interruptions and disturbances, many mighty and great Works have been carried on by us Worms, and no Men. You, Sir, have a new Waincoat Chair, and our Seats that were but covered with Mats when we came first to sit here, are now lined with good Broad Cloth of 16 s. a yard, and the whole House is hang'd in a better manner than any man expected. But this is not all that we have done, for we have reformed Religion, and brought the Church as high to what it was in the Primitive times among Jews and ^{Christians} ~~pagans~~, as may be; for the ^{Christians} ~~pagans~~ have told all they

have long since, and laid it at our feet, and we begin once more to have all things in common. Beside, Sir, we have done strange Justice on the late Tyrant, and transform'd the Kingdom into a Commonwealth, as *Nebuchadnezzar* was into a Beast. But there is one thing that we have omitted, no less necessary then any thing that we have done, and which indeed the people have much more reason to expect from us; for Reformation, as well as Charity, should begin at home: To hold forth my meaning in brief to you, Sir, it is the cleansing of our own *House of Office*; and if that name be not mannerly enough for this place, it is in your power to help it: for there is a spare name that hath been lately conferr'd on this Honourable House by the people, which was once called the *House of Parliament*, as it is now, the *Rump*. This name, in my opinion, we cannot better dispose of, then in conferring it on the House I spoke of, that not only that, but all other Houses of the same quality (of which ours is the Representative) may in the right thereof hereafter be call'd a *Rump*, as being a name more proper and significant, in regard of the relation it hath to that part. And truly, Sir, I believe, the wisdom and justice of this House can do no less, if you please but to consider the near and intimate correspondence that House has ever held with this, as having ever been entrusted with the most urgent and weighty matters that we ever carried on, and so necessary, that I may boldly say, without that recourse which we have had to it in our greatest extremities, this House might have suffered for it many a time and oft. It is now, Sir, as full, as this Honourable House was once of Members, and as unuseful, until we take some course to empty it, as we did this, which, I humbly conceive, we can by no means avoid: For, under favour, I do not think we can use this House, as we did the *House of Lords*; I mean, Vote it down, when it will serve our turn no longer; no, this is a matter of a higher nature, and more weighty concernment; and as the difference is very great in reason of State, so is it also in point of Conscience. For though it is true, we engaged and swore to maintain the *House of Lords*, yet we did it not after a right manner: For we read, it was a custom among the *Jews*, when they made any solemn Vow, to put their hands under one anothers Hams; and if we had done so when we swore that, and kiss'd the Book, I grant, we had been bound in conscience to have upheld it longer than we did, I mean, longer than we had need of it: but we, quite contrary, held up our hands, and so are not bound to keep it other while than we took it, that is, hand over head; for unless we differ'd from the *Jews* in other matters more than we do, I know no reason why we should in this. — But now I speak of the *Jews*, give me leave, by observing one passage in their History, to hold forth unto you the danger of suppressing the aforesaid House. *Saul*, for want of such a convenience, going into a Cave where *David* had hid himself, had like to have lost his life; for if *David* had been one of us, I know what had become of *Saul*, he would rather have cut off his Head than a piece of his Coat, as I wonder he did not, since, being a Prophet, he might have made Scripture of purpose to have prov'd him a Tyrant and a Traitor, as we did *Law* to condemn the late King after he was put to death. But though *David* were wiser than his Teachers, he was not so wise as we were; 'Tis true, for his own advantage, he knew how to make the silly *Philistines* believe he was mad; but I am mistaken if we have not out-

done

done him that way too, and made the wisest think us so. But to return to the purpose. Suppose, Sir, the Army should have occasion to give this Honourable House a purge again, you would be loth it should work here; and truly I do not know what other way you have to avoid it, unless we should make use of that place where the Assembly of Divines lately sat; which for my part, I like very well, if it were nearer; and certainly they have no reason to take it ill; for it is according to the example of the best Reformed Churches. And I know no reason why we may not as well sit there, and make four faces, at our own charges, as they did at the charge of the Commonwealth. For mine own part, (did not the common good provoke me to it) I have as little reason to speak as another, and perhaps less; for my Breeches are made close at the knees, and so better fitted against a mischance. Beside, I know the worst of it, for I believe you have often heard what I have suffer'd in the service of my Country. But let that pass, though it were the worse for my Reputation, and my Breeches, it was the better for my Body, and my Soul too, for I have edify'd much by it. 'Tis true, the Boys hold their Noses, and cry *Fogh*, when they see me in the Streets; but, What of that? A wise man knows how to make an advantage of the greatest disasters, and so have I done. For there was a time (Mr. Speaker) when this Honourable House had like to have been a Foul-House; And when was that? Truly it was when the Prentices came hither, to shew us one trick more than ever we taught them: Then did I take this worshiptul Chain off my Neck, and very politickly put it in my Codpiece; for I know well enough, that no body in this Town, where I am so well known, would venture to look for it there; and I was not mistaken, for here you see I have it still. The same thing I did at another time, and that was, when (as you may well remember) a piece of Plaister falling from the Roof, some of the Members cried, *Treason*, and many made haste to get out of the House as fast as they could; so did not I, no, Sir, I resolv'd to stay by it; and therefore (having put my Chain in my Codpiece) I crept under the Bench in this very place where I now sit, and there I lay close, until I heard some that were near me say, They smell'd Gun-powder; but then I knew it was a mistake, and so it prov'd indeed: but if it had been otherwise, no danger should have made me forsake my duty. No, Sir, I have been so faithful to this House, and so constant to my Principles, that I have not changed so much as my Seat since the happy beginning of this Parliament. In this very place did I then sit; on both sides of me sat two Members, that afterwards prov'd Malignants; for they took snuff at something that fell from me in my zeal to the Cause, and ran to *Oxford* to the King; their Estates are long since sold, for which the Commonwealth may thank me: For verily, Sir, I have not been altogether an unprofitable Member, according to my Talent, and the dispensation of what was in me; for my Bowels have been often pour'd out for the prosperity of this House; and, I hope, my conversation hath held forth so much of the inward man, as may be sufficient to satisfy the well-affected, by whom I am entrusted. And as for my Back-biters, I forgive them freely; alas, they hurt themselves, and not me; for if they get any thing by dealing with me that way, they must have good luck.

SIR,

SIR,

I have us'd the more freedom with you, because I have some pretence to your pardon; for I believe you have often observ'd, that when any thing has fallen from any of my fellow-Members that the House has resent'd, it has presently been laid to my charge, and I have always taken it upon me freely; for I shall never refuse to serve this House in any sense whatsoever. I shall therefore humbly move, that you would be pleas'd, to order this Honourable House to adjourn for a convenient time, until that House be emptied and made sweet again; for if we should sit here before, it will not be in the power of any one man to own so much stink as will be laid to my charge.

F I N I S.

